

Draft Waterspace Strategy Public Consultation

February 2012



1. Introduction

I invite all those with an interest or stake in the future of the Scottish canals to help us shape a dynamic new Waterspace Strategy to encourage more people to live, work and play on the water.

Why do we need a Waterspace Strategy and why now? Simply put, over the past decade, tremendous progress has been made on the bankside in delivering the Scottish Government's vision and policy for the canals but there is still much we can, and need to, achieve on the water.

Through a number of well advanced partnership projects delivering sustainable economic development and improvements to the towpath and public realm, the canals are increasingly providing waterside communities with a sense of 'place'. They stimulate active living and, importantly, drive economic growth through tourism and regeneration.

There is no doubt that the ongoing success of the 'placemaking' on the bankside and stimulating an increasingly dynamic 'waterspace' are interdependent. Boaters tell us they want more activity and amenities on and off the water. Communities tell us they want an attractive, animated canal. The Scottish Government and our local partners want a vibrant waterway which delivers real value for waterside communities and attracts tourists, commerce and investment.

“ an asset that, if used wisely, can enhance the future quality of life in Scotland... „

*Scotland's Canals – an asset for the future,
Scottish Government Policy Document*



Yours to enjoy anytime



Help us begin to develop an exciting, new Waterspace Strategy and ensure the continuing success of the Scottish canals.

Within this initial consultation, we address what the basic principles of the Waterspace Strategy should be if it is to successfully support the different needs and expectations of the varied groups on the water. Today, these groups include leisure and transiting boats, a small number of residential and commercial customers and a host of charities, social enterprises and canal societies working hard to engage people with the Scottish canals.

Next, we explore how we can realise the potential of the residential and commercial markets and, importantly, in a way which is in harmony with all these existing groups which are at the heart of the waterspace. I believe that a well considered and consultative approach in growing these new markets will ensure we create an increasingly attractive environment and one which will work to the benefit of all waterway users.

As a valued stakeholder, I invite you to take part in this consultation and help us begin to develop an exciting, new Waterspace Strategy and ensure the continuing success of the Scottish canals.

Steve Dunlop, Director, British Waterways Scotland

2. Responding to the Consultation

Responses to this consultation should be sent to British Waterways Scotland (BWS) by close of play on Friday 11th May 2012 using the contact details below.

A word document template is available to download at www.scottishcanals.co.uk

By post to:

Draft Waterspace Strategy Public Consultation
Attention : Frances Mimmagh
British Waterways Scotland
Canal House, Applecross Street, Glasgow G4 9SP

By email to:

Frances.Mimmagh@britishwaterways.co.uk

Questions

Questions and requests for further information should be directed in the first instance to Frances Mimmagh, Property and Regeneration, British Waterways Scotland, by telephone: 0141 354 7534 or email: Frances.Mimmagh@britishwaterways.co.uk

Publication of Submissions

A summary of submissions will be available at www.scottishcanals.co.uk or by telephoning British Waterways Scotland on 0141 354 7534 after Wednesday 20th June 2012.



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3. Public Consultation Events

We are keen to canvass the views of as many interested individuals and organisations as possible. This includes, but is not restricted to, waterside communities, boating, paddling, rowing and angling groups, local and national partners and people who would, if the opportunity was there, live or operate a business on the water.

To help facilitate this, there will be three public consultation events – in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Inverness.

In Edinburgh and Glasgow, the events will be informal, ‘drop in’ sessions and held as follows:

Edinburgh

Re-Union Offices,
Edinburgh Quay,
off Fountainbridge, EH3 9AG

3pm – 8pm,
Wednesday 21st March 2012

Glasgow

British Waterways Scotland Offices,
Canal House, Applecross Street,
Glasgow G4 9SP

3pm – 8pm
Thursday 22nd March 2012

In **Inverness**, the consultation event will be held as part of the annual customer forum on Saturday 14th April. If you are not an existing customer and wish to be advised of the times and venue when they are set, please send your details to Frances.Mimnagh@britishwaterways.co.uk

Yours to enjoy Anytime



The objective of the Waterspace Strategy is to increase animation on the Scottish canals in a way which ensures harmony between all waterway users and creates an increasingly attractive community space and destination for boaters and tourists.



4. The Waterspace Strategy

Objective

The objective of the Waterspace Strategy is to increase animation on the Scottish canals in a way which ensures harmony between all waterway users and creates an increasingly attractive community space and destination for boaters and tourists.

Guiding Principles

By having a series of Guiding Principles, we will ensure that everything we do to deliver the Waterspace Strategy will be to the benefit of all waterway users and not favour one interest group over another.

Indeed, whilst the focus of this consultation is on the residential and commercial markets, it is emphasised that the aim of the Waterspace Strategy will always be to encourage greater use amongst all sectors of the boating market. Developing the residential and commercial markets will not, for example, be at the expense of the leisure market but rather will complement and help develop that market too.

The proposed Guiding Principles of the Waterspace Strategy are:

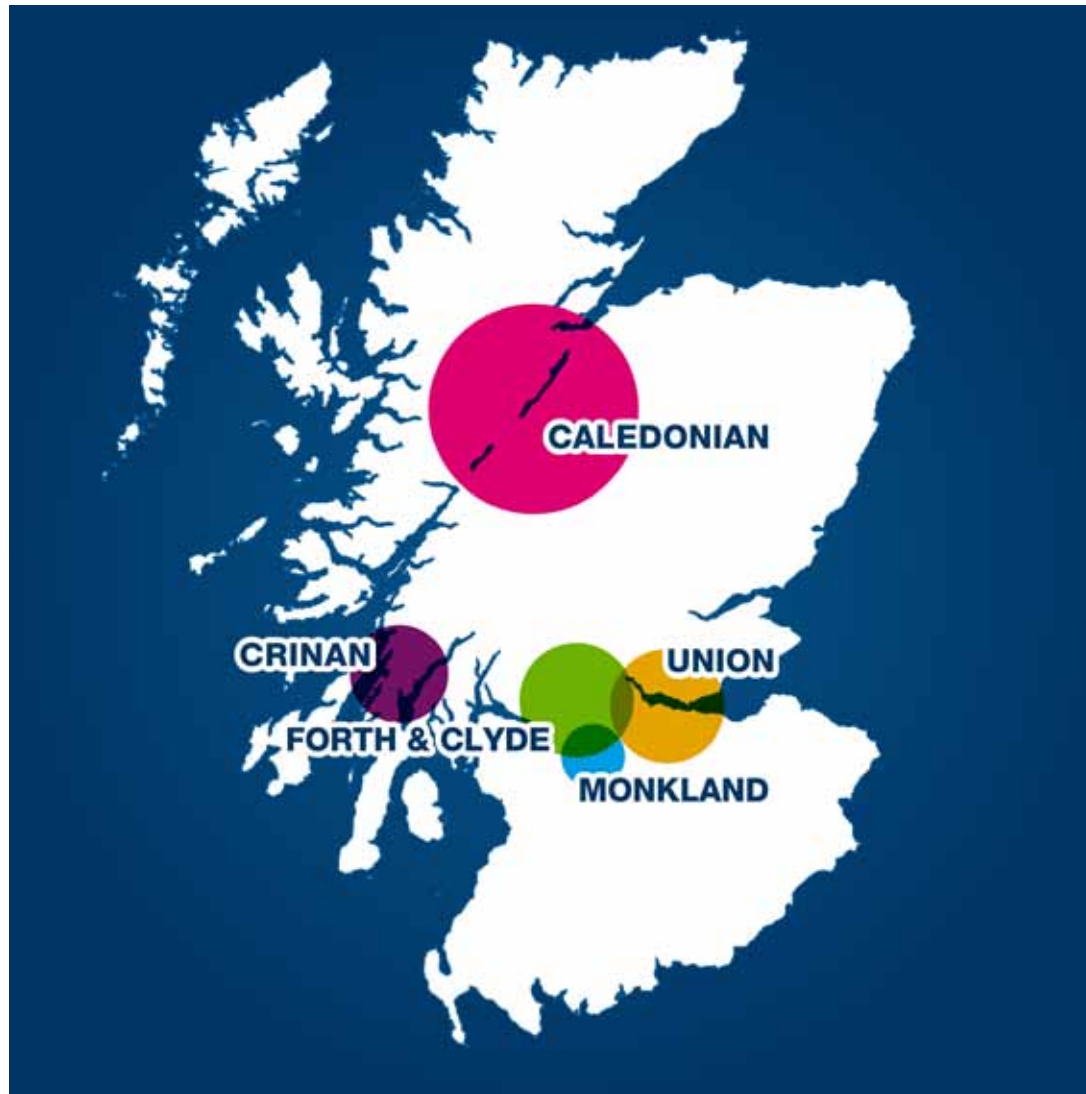
- Boating is at the heart of the Scottish canals and it must thrive and help to sustain the canals into the future
- A vibrant waterway is one:
 - which supports and attracts a wide variety of complementary boating markets, including leisure, transit, residential, commercial, social enterprise and charity, which, in symbiosis will assist the growth of each other
 - where, when there is competition between different boating groups for bankside space, there are policies in place to encourage a fair and appropriate allocation and mix
 - which reflects the different strengths and opportunities of each canal as well as the needs and expectations of different community and canal user groups within each canalside location
- To stimulate the growth of the residential market and, as that market matures, encourage and engage new residential moorings providers so that there is a variety of different offers available, including varying levels of facility and price
- To stimulate the growth of the commercial market in a way which supports the differing needs within what is a broad spectrum of commercial activity, from social enterprise through to medium sized tourism operators
- Investment will be made in new mooring facilities only when there is a sound business case and income generated through the new moorings reinvested back into waterway maintenance and repair



Question

What are your thoughts on the suggested Guiding Principles outlined above? Do you have others to suggest?

Yours to enjoy anytime



Whilst all five Scottish canals were built around two hundred years ago during the Industrial Revolution, today, they each have a unique personality with different strengths and opportunities.



A Local Approach

Whilst all five Scottish canals were built around two hundred years ago during the Industrial Revolution, today, they each have a unique personality and should, and do, fulfill a different role locally. This should be reflected within the Waterspace Strategy.

The Caledonian and Crinan Canals

The Caledonian Canal in the Highlands and the Crinan Canal in Mid Argyll are mature waterways which are increasingly popular within international sailing markets. These two canals see the most transiting craft and the Caledonian, in particular, attracts almost 50% of its visitors from abroad, predominantly from Scandinavia.

The drive here is to continue to develop new amenities and facilities for visiting boaters and paddlers and create an increasingly busy and attractive waterside destination for tourists coming to 'boat, bike or boot' through the Great Glen or Mid Argyll.

The Lowland Canals

In contrast, the Union and Forth & Clyde canals have a different dynamic. Reopened a decade ago through the £83.5m Lottery funded Millennium Link Project¹, they have a greater population base within easy access. Here, the focus is using the waterway as a catalyst to stimulate economic growth and regeneration, drive tourism and promote active recreation on the towpath.



The Lowland canals are still in the early stages of redevelopment. Although there was a rapid increase in long term moored boats between 2002 and 2006, these numbers have unfortunately plateaued over the past five years. We firmly believe that if we are to develop this market we need to capitalise on the opportunity to create a more varied mix of boating uses here. This includes further developing the residential and commercial market.

¹ The Lottery funded Millennium Link Project made possible the reopening of the two Lowland canals, the Union and Forth & Clyde, and the creation of world's only rotating boatlift, The Falkirk Wheel, which connects them. The Millennium Link brought the canals back to life and made travel between east and west coasts, Edinburgh and Glasgow, possible for the first time since the late 1930s.

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5. Phase 1 - Stimulating Residential and Commercial Markets

5.1. Benefit and Opportunity

5.1.1. Current Context

At present, there are only 25 official residential moorings on the Scottish canals and these are located on the Lowland canals only.

There are five official residential moorings on the Union Canal (at Ratho) and 20 on the Forth & Clyde Canal (at Auchinstarry, Bowling and Applecross Street, Glasgow).

Most of these residential moorings have developed over time in an organic manner. As such, this is an untested market.

At present, there are a variety of commercial organisations operating on the Scottish canals, from social enterprises and canal societies through to hire boat companies and passenger cruisers. Again, this market has evolved organically over time.

5.1.2 The Benefits of A More Dynamic Waterspace

We believe that taking a proactive approach now to drive the development of a strong residential and commercial community would deliver a number of benefits to other boating interests, local communities and Scotland as a whole. These include:

- adding new activity and vibrancy to the waterway scene helping ensure the Scottish canals are an attractive place to live, work and play
- increasing animation on the water in a way which will complement other waterway users
- attracting new users of the canals by meeting changing lifestyle needs and the current interest in 'living by the water'
- offering a competitive and attractive alternative for housing which could, in a small way, potentially, contribute to the Scottish housing shortfall and help towards delivering the Scottish Government's housing strategy in the long-term
- creating a fresh opportunity and attractive location for commercial enterprises
- providing income for the local economy by attracting new residents and increased visitors who spend money in nearby amenities and services such as boatyards and chandleries
- providing new commercial services and amenities for the local community and visitors
- providing a human presence on quieter stretches of canal and a greater sense of security along the towpath for visitors and local communities
- creating a dynamic waterspace which is attractive to partners, investment and tourists
- generating income to reinvest in the canals and sustain this historic and environmental resource
- providing attractive, safe and welcoming locations
- giving the canals a strong sense of purpose and encouraging civic ownership

Question

What are your thoughts on the benefits outlined above?



5.2. Market Assumptions

Whilst we have not tested the residential and commercial markets in earnest to date, we believe that with a focused and proactive approach we could develop a strong demand for living on the Scottish canals and stimulate a greater number of businesses adding colour and amenity to the waterways.

This belief is based on a number of assumptions. Some of these we can look to examples elsewhere to support, others are based on our understanding of the Scottish canal environment. These assumptions are:

5.2.1. The Residential Market

a/ There will be a strong response from the market

We know that, generally, there is a strong demand from people who want to live on the water as Irish, Dutch and Scandinavian markets show and the growth in the number of people living on the English canals. We have also received a number of enquiries about residential moorings on the Scottish canals since the website www.scottishcanals.co.uk was launched in 2010.

b/ Living on the water will appeal to boaters and non-boaters

We believe that the enduring popularity of 'living by the water' and changing lifestyles and economic priorities, will ensure a mix of both boaters and non-boaters living on the Scottish canals.



c/ There will be some locations which are more popular than others but enough variation in demand to ensure a spread of residential boats across the canals

There is no doubt that the services we could provide at different locations on the Scottish canals would vary. However, we know from markets elsewhere that different levels of facilities appeal to different customers for economic, lifestyle and social reasons. Some want to live in an urban environment, others prefer a semi-rural or rural setting. It follows that different levels of amenity at different locations will cater to different demands.

5.2.2. The Commercial Market

The rich mix of commercial enterprises currently operating on the Scottish canals has grown organically. We believe that, with a more proactive strategy in place, this will be an exciting and potentially significant market for the future.

Question

Do you think we have got these assumptions right?

5.3 Proposed Locations

There are a number of locations on the Scottish canals which may be appropriate places to create clusters or communities of residential and commercial boats². There is enough capacity at each location to cater to all boating uses without compromising any.

Whilst we would consult with local community and boating groups in any location before advancing plans to release residential or commercial moorings, we are keen to hear initial thoughts on the following locations now.



Bowling Harbour

Whilst we hope, in the long-term to see a masterplan for the area between Bowling Basin and the Exxon site developed, we are keen to improve access to Bowling Harbour and see new residential and retail accommodation, on and off the water.

Grangemouth

In 2013, the £43m Lottery funded Helix project will open and a new canal extension and waterside hub will be central to this major new destination. New residential and commercial moorings will play a key role in establishing vibrancy to the new canal and the new landscape.

Auchinstarry, near Kilsyth

The new marina at Auchinstarry, near Kilsyth, with its highly regarded Boathouse restaurant and bar and semi-rural setting, has been a tremendous success. Additional residential moorings could secure this location as a visitor destination for the central belt.

Lochrin (Edinburgh Quay)

Edinburgh Quay is adjacent to busy Fountainbridge and close to the city centre. As part of the new Edinburgh Canal Strategy, led with our partners City of Edinburgh Council, we envisage a series of new moorings occupied by a varied selection of residential, commercial and leisure craft.

² New residential moorings in each Lowland location would be subject to British Waterways Scotland obtaining planning approvals from the appropriate local authority

Yours to enjoy anytime

Ratho

There is a strong demand for additional residential moorings at this popular, semi-rural location, five miles from Edinburgh. CALA Homes has committed to create a 30 berth marina here as part of their planning consent.

Linlithgow

This is another desirable location which we believe would appeal to people wanting to live on the water.

The Caledonian Canal

In addition to developments at Seaport Marina, we are currently talking to local waterside communities between Neptune's Staircase, Banavie, and Gairloch, exploring which locations along this stretch of the Caledonian Canal might be appropriate for, and benefit from, sustainable economic development. This would be likely to include new residential and commercial moorings.

The Crinan Canal

Currently, we have no aspirations to add new residential or commercial moorings on the Crinan Canal. However, if you feel that we should, please let us know as part of your response.

Question

What are your thoughts on the potential locations outlined above? Do you have any others you would like to suggest? Please outline them telling us why you think they would be good locations.



5.4 Attracting New Residents and Commercial Organisations

5.4.1. The Residential Market

We believe that the key to creating the most vibrant residential community possible will be to offer both leased moorings and residential boats for rent.

As we would need to invest significant capital in purchasing boats for rental, we would not envisage offering this until the market is proven and established and there is a good business case for doing so. This could, of course, also be an area of opportunity taken up by third party providers.

The initial residential offer, therefore, would be leased residential moorings for those who currently own, or decide to buy, a boat which they can live aboard.

Question

Do you think a mix of leased moorings and residential boats for rent in the long-term would be the right one?

5.4.2. The Commercial Market

There is a small but rich mix of commercial businesses operating on the Scottish canals, from charities, canal societies and social enterprises through to cafe boats, small offices and large hire and trip boats.

If we are to support the growth of our existing commercial customers and attract a greater number of similarly varied commercial customers, we believe we cannot and should not take a 'one shoe fits all' approach.

Instead, we will work with each new commercial customer (and existing customers at the expiry of their current agreement) individually, to agree the right length of lease, facilities and pricing structure which will support the strategic growth and development of that business and reflect the contribution which that business makes, in turn, to the growth and development of the canal which they operate on.

Question

Do you think a bespoke approach to commercial customers is the right approach? Do you have a different approach you would like to suggest?



Yours to enjoy anytime

5.5. Other Practical Considerations

5.5.1. Length of Lease for Residential Customers

We propose offering a one year lease only at first. This will give us the flexibility to adapt this new product to the market.

We are conscious, however, that residents, and potentially lenders providing funds to purchase a residential boat, may require the confidence of a long lease period. Therefore, as the market establishes, we might seek to offer other lease lengths and terms.

Question

What lease lengths and terms would you like to see offered and why?

5.5.2 Purchasing a Boat with a Residential or Commercial Mooring

Currently those buying a boat already moored on the Scottish canals do not receive an automatic option on the mooring.

Being able to sell a vessel with the remaining period of the residential or commercial mooring agreement may give boatowners and purchasers more flexibility.

In this instance, BWS would reserve the right to assess the suitability of the incoming residential tenant and would only agree to new commercial operators taking over existing agreements where the service provided fits with the waterspace strategy for that specific location.

BWS would also apply a facilitation charge which could be 5% of the vessel's value or three times the annual mooring fee, whichever is the greater.

Question

Do you think this is appropriate and do you think it would be an attractive option, even if it incurs a facilitation charge?



Yours to enjoy anytime

5.5.3 Moorings for Large Boats

As outlined above, a key objective of the Waterspace Strategy is to encourage a rich variety of vessel on the Scottish canals. Some boats are larger in size and take up more than one mooring or restrict other boats from occupying a neighbouring mooring. We propose that, in these circumstances, customers are charged for both moorings.

Question

Do you think that this would be an appropriate and fair approach?

5.6 Long-Term Residential Live-Aboards

It is recognised that a small number of people currently occupy a mooring on an informal 'live-aboard' basis. Some of these people are long-standing members of the canalside community and some have families living onboard.

We will write to any potential informal live-aboards on the Scottish canals asking them to confirm if they are a live-aboard and that their boat is their main residence.

Thereafter, we propose that a fair approach would be to give informal live-aboard residents the following options:

- To relocate to an approved residential mooring if one is available and pay the residential mooring fee for that location
- To remain in the current leisure mooring if an alternative mooring is not available but apply for all the necessary consents required for a residential mooring within six months and pay the residential mooring fee for that location. If no residential mooring fee is set for their existing berth, a minimum fee of 1.5 times the leisure rate will be used. (Under these particular circumstances, this berth would not be available for sale with the boat.)

This second option would be progressed at BWS' discretion.

In both options, the increase in moorings fee would be phased in over three to five years.

If a potential live-aboard responds that they do not live aboard but continues to use their boat in that manner, the necessary actions will be taken by BWS and this may result in the boat being removed from the canal.

Question

What are your thoughts on the proposed approach to informal live-aboard residents outlined above?

5.7 Residential Waiting List

Whilst we have waiting lists for existing residential mooring locations, we do not intend to operate a residential waiting list system as a way to allocate new moorings in the future³.

The new residential moorings made available may reduce the number of people on the existing waiting lists which are now closed and we will review to what degree as we progress.

In the meantime, we are keen to hear your thoughts about how we work with those on the current waiting list.

Question

How do you think we should work with the current waiting list?

³ There has never been a commercial waiting list in place on the Scottish canals.

Yours to enjoy anytime

6. Testing the Market – A Pilot Scheme

To test our assumptions about the residential and commercial markets and the benefits outlined above, we propose a pilot scheme which will begin in Summer 2012 and run up to 31st December 2012.

The pilot scheme will give us an understanding of the level of demand within the residential and commercial marketplace and the needs and expectations of these customers.

6.1 Pilot Locations

We propose testing the urban market first with three locations, two in the Lowlands and one in the Highlands.

Leamington Wharf, Edinburgh

Speirs Wharf, Glasgow

Seaport Marina, Inverness

All three are key urban locations identified within canal corridor strategies with local partners. They are good examples of where there has been excellent progress on the bankside and there would be real and immediate benefits of increasing vibrancy on the water.

Speirs Wharf sits within the Glasgow Canal Regeneration Project to revitalise the Glasgow branch of the Forth & Clyde Canal. Leamington Wharf sits within the Edinburgh Canal Strategy developed with the City of Edinburgh Council. Seaport Marina sits within greater regeneration

aspirations held with our partners the Highland Council.

Speirs Wharf and Leamington Wharf have no current residential offer. New moorings have recently been created at Seaport Marina and would be appropriate for the pilot.

Existing Residential Customers

Our existing residential customers, who have pioneered on the water living for many years, will not be affected by the pilot scheme or its outcome. For these existing residential customers, the current rates and annual review process will be honoured for the next three years.





Speirs Wharf, Glasgow

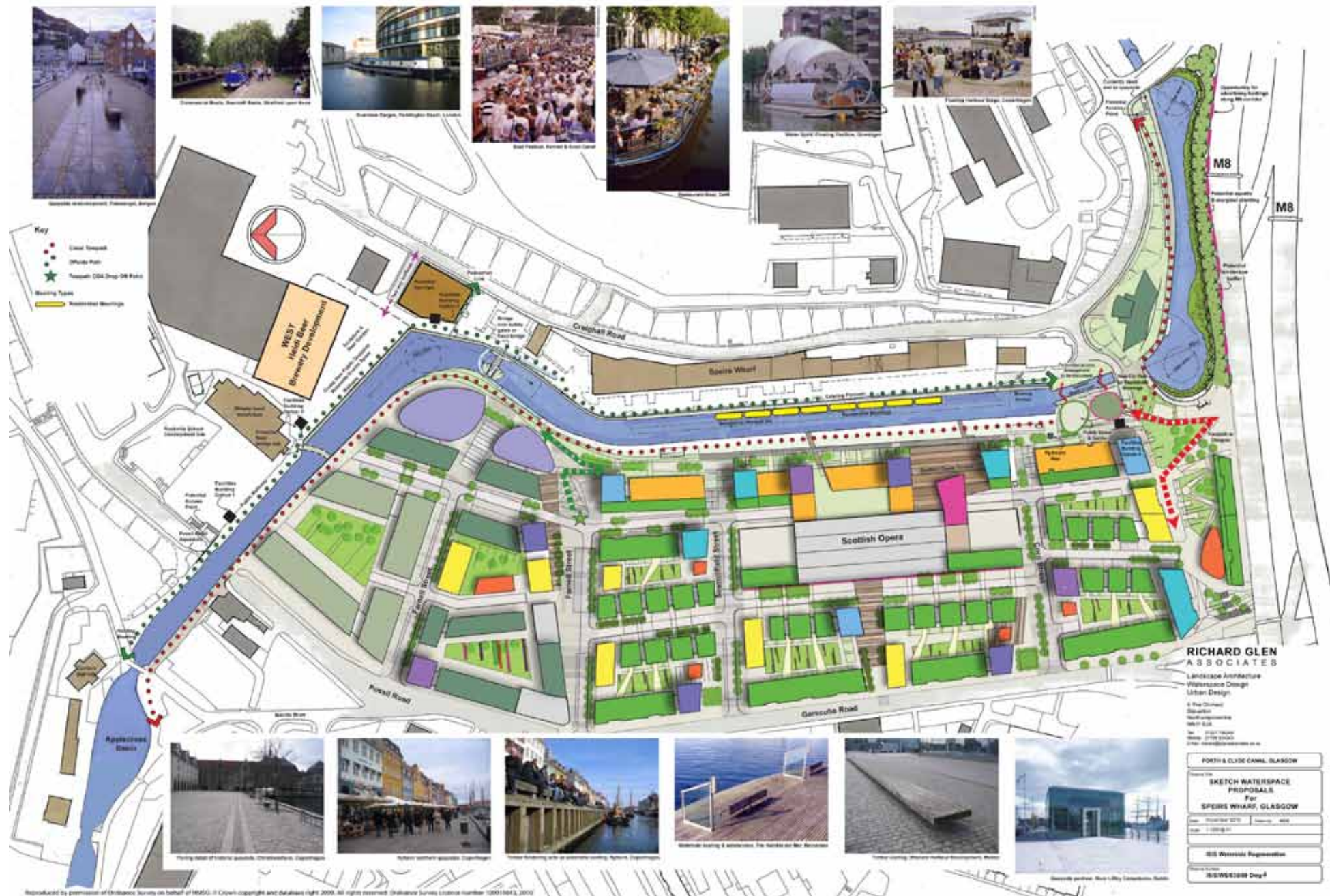
We propose to allocate eight residential moorings here.

All moorings will have full access to electricity and water supplies and a pump out facility nearby. (BWS will make provision for emergency pump out when the canal water is frozen.)

BWS has limited car parking space available at Speirs Wharf. However, there are other local providers with long-term parking facilities nearby.

Speirs Wharf is also ideal for those who prefer to travel by sustainable transport. There is easy access to bus, rail and underground services either nearby or within the city centre. To support those customers, BWS will also, where possible, install bicycle storage close to the moorings.

Yours to enjoy anytime



Leamington Wharf, Edinburgh

We propose to allocate eight residential moorings at Leamington Wharf to increase the vibrancy between here and Edinburgh Quay, located less than half a mile away.

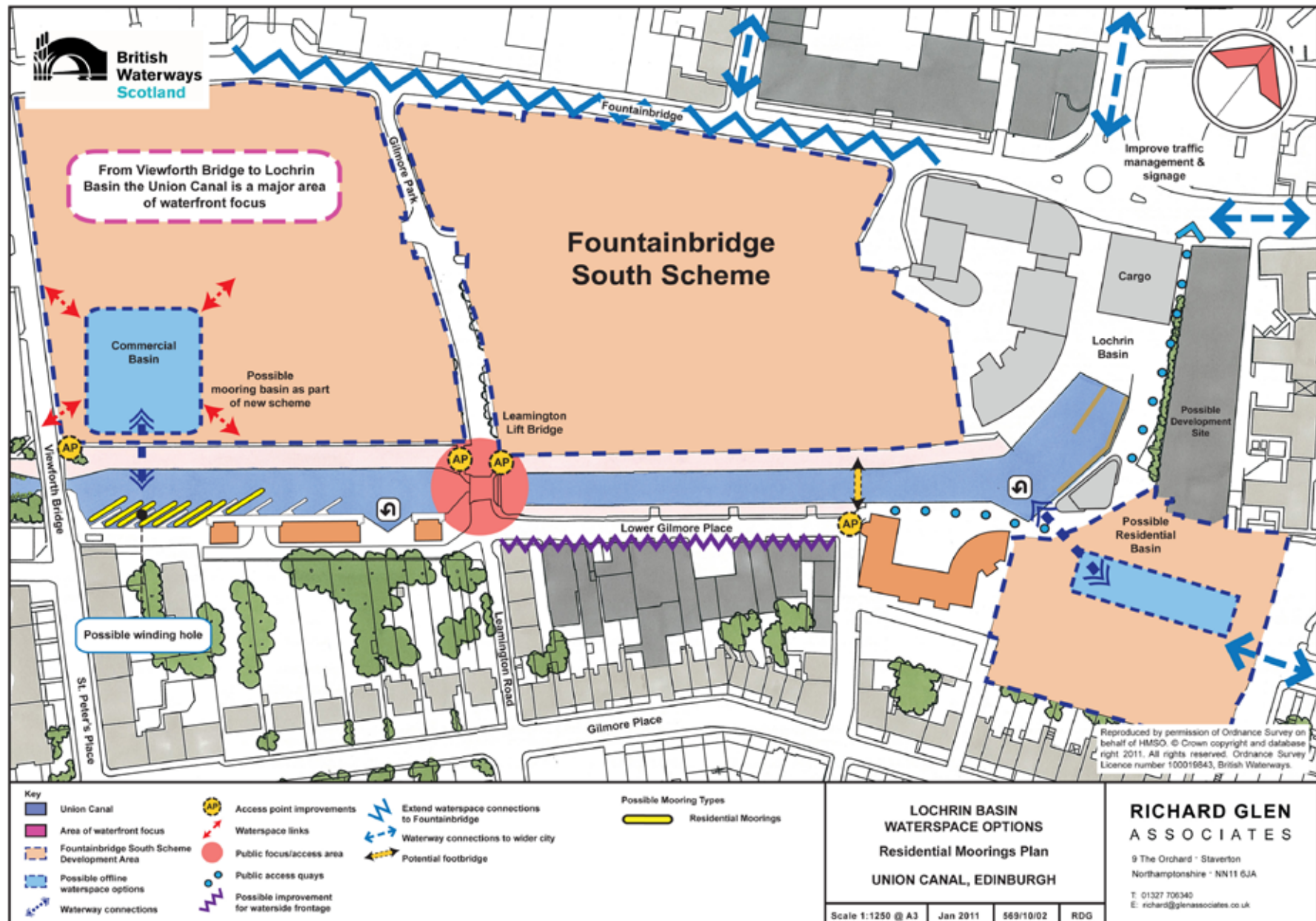
All moorings will have full access to electricity and water supplies and a pump out facility nearby. (BWS will make provision for emergency pump out when the canal water is frozen.)

There is no BWS car parking space available at Leamington Wharf. However, there are other local providers with long-term parking facilities nearby.

Leamington Wharf is also ideal for those who prefer to travel by sustainable transport. There is easy access to bus and rail services either nearby or within the city centre. To support those customers, BWS will also, where possible, install bicycle storage close to the moorings.



Yours to enjoy anytime



Seaport Marina, Inverness

We propose allocating 16 new moorings installed recently as part of a major investment in Seaport Marina as residential moorings.

All moorings will have full access to electricity and water supplies and a pump out facility nearby. (BWS will make provision for emergency pump out when the canal water is frozen.)

BWS has limited car parking space available at Seaport Marina. However, there are other local providers with long-term parking facilities nearby.

Seaport Marina is also ideal for those who prefer to travel by sustainable transport. There is easy access to bus and rail services either nearby or within the city centre. To support those customers, BWS will also, where possible, install bicycle storage close to the moorings.

Question

What are your thoughts on the potential pilot locations proposed above?



Yours to enjoy anytime



6.2. Allocating Residential Moorings during the Pilot

We propose testing the residential market using the online auction system.

British Waterways in England and Wales introduced this system in 2007 and it has proven a successful method of establishing market demand and price for individual locations.

Each mooring will be released by online auction and bids will be taken over an auction period of 28 days.

The auction materials will include:

- a published minimum price which will be set by BWS
- a clear description of how to register and make an offer
- the full specification for the specific mooring which will include the maximum boat dimensions and the facilities available (BWS will reserve the right to refuse to release a mooring if the appearance or specification of the vessel does not fit with the requirements of the location)
- the draft terms and conditions for that specific mooring, including the obligations of both BWS and the successful bidder

The mooring will go to the highest bidder who can fulfill the necessary requirements outlined within the auction materials within 14 days of the auction closing.

The successful bidder will be offered an agreement for the term of one year (please see 5.5.1. above).

The successful bidder will be required to pay the mooring fee once the contract is in place and have their residential boat in the mooring not later than six months from the contract date.

Question

Do you think that the online auction system is the best way to generate a market price for this untested product? If not, do you have an alternative idea which will still generate the market price for moorings?

6.3. Allocating Commercial Moorings during the Pilot

We propose offering new commercial moorings to existing commercial customers which might be looking for additional space and to those who have expressed an interest in the past. We will also actively market the new commercial moorings on www.scottishcanals.co.uk

Question

Do you have any ideas about how to attract new commercial operators to the Scottish canals?



Yours to enjoy anytime



6.4. Measuring Success

We propose evaluating the success of the pilot scheme using the following measurements:

Demand

- The number of people expressing an interest in living or operating a business on the water during the marketing period
- The number of people bidding during the residential online auction process
- The number of residential and commercial moorings successfully let during the pilot scheme

Quality of Experience

- Of those taking up a residential or commercial mooring
- The response of the local community and boating groups using the particular stretch of the waterway

Question

Do you think the proposed measurements are the best way to measure success and give us the best understanding of the market for moving forward? Do you have other ideas?

6.5. After the Pilot

We will come back to everyone after the pilot and outline the findings, good and bad, and whether or not they show a demand for a national residential and commercial mooring framework.

If we do progress to rolling residential and commercial moorings out nationally, we will begin by talking to local stakeholders exploring what each location plan could and should look like.

7. Final Thoughts

Question

Please give us any additional thoughts you might have on developing the residential or commercial markets on the Scottish canals.



Yours to enjoy anytime

Consultation



Pilot Scheme

